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ABSTRACT

This document acquaints providers of continuing education and training with the appropriate use and application of the Continuing Education Unit (CEU). It particularly outlines minimum requirements for awarding the CEU. A definition of the CEU (ten contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction) and information on application of the CEU concept are provided first. The next section sets forth the administrative and program criteria which the Council on the CEU has developed as the minimum requirements for awarding CEU for continuing education activities. Guidelines are also offered for the interpretation and application of the criteria in designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating activities. Subsequent sections discuss the determination of the number of CEU to be awarded and alternative delivery methods and examples of activities that do not meet CEU criteria. Suggestions are then made about statements and forms that may be used. Other contents include information on using the CEU for data collection, questions and answers about the CEU, the history and development of the CEU, and information on the Council on the CEU and membership in the Council. (YLB)

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The Continuing Education Unit

Criteria and Guidelines

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DEFINITION

THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT

One Continuing Education Unit (CEU) is

TEN CONTACT HOURS OF PARTICIPATION
IN AN ORGANIZED CONTINUING EDUCATION
EXPERIENCE UNDER RESPONSIBLE
SPONSORSHIP, CAPABLE DIRECTION,
AND QUALIFIED INSTRUCTION.

PREFACE

The Continuing Education Unit Criteria and Guidelines was originally written by the National Task Force that defined the CEU in 1970. In the last decade, the Council on the Continuing Education Unit, carrying on the work of the Task Force, has re-issued the *Criteria* with only minor modifications dictated by experience and by studies supported by the Council. The document has acquainted providers of continuing education and training with the appropriate use and application of the CEU.

This third edition of *The Continuing Education Unit Criteria and Guidelines* contains more substantive revisions than previous editions. As the result of a major study, the Council has recently published *Principles of Good Practice in Continuing Education. Principles* summarizes goals for all providers of continuing education and training; *Criteria* outlines minimum requirements for awarding the Continuing Education Unit. This edition of the *Criteria* has been revised to reflect more closely the concepts embodied in the *Principles*, especially increased emphasis on assessing learning outcomes, and to advance the field of continuing education and training.

The Council is indebted to hundreds of individuals, representing a wide spectrum of organizations and institutions, who have assisted in testing and evaluating the concept of the CEU. Our hope is that the millions of people who participate annually in noncredit education and training programs will be the ultimate beneficiaries of this cooperative effort.

The Council gratefully acknowledges the work of the Editorial Committee in the final preparation of this third edition of the *Criteria.* The committee, chaired by Mr. Conrad P. Ferrara, Centers for Disease Control, U.S. Public Health Service, included Dr. Grover J. Andrews, North Carolina State University; Dr. John W. Enell, Vice President for Research, Juran Institute, Inc.; Dr. Ruth Gallinot, Educational Consultant; Dr. Keith E. Glancy, Executive Director of the Council; Dr. Louis E. Phillips, University of Georgia; and Dr. John R. Valley, Educational Testing Service (retired). Members of the Executive Committee of the Council served as ex officio members of the Editorial Committee.

Audrey F. Spector
President
Council on the Continuing Education Unit

Atlanta, Georgia
January 1986

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APPLICATION OF THE CEU CONCEPT

Application of the CEU concept by sponsors and providers of continuing education experiences produces positive benefits to those organizations, as well as to the users or consumers of the experiences they offer. However, maximum benefits accrue only by adherence to the stated criteria and guidelines for awarding continuing education units as presented in this document.

Benefits to the Sponsor or Provider

Adherence to the critera for awarding CEU can accomplish the following:

- Establish permanent records of training and continuing education experiences for individual participants;
- Provide a uniform system for accumulating and reporting comparable data for use in program planning, design, and implementation; program evaluation; and administration and fiscal management;
- Establish a system of measurement for the collection of data on a state, regional, or national basis needed for public policy determination and legislative action relating to the field of continuing education and training.

The Continuing Education Unit is designed to facilitate recording, accumulating, and exchanging standardized information about individual participation and learning achievement in continuing education experiences. The CEU is intended to serve all interests in noncredit continuing education and training, whether public or private, individual, institutional, organizational, governmental, or societal. The CEU concept is applicable regardless of the educational level or experience of the participants, the subject matter, technical level of content, program or activity format, or instructional methodology.

Based on 10 contact hours of participation, the CEU is decimally related to the instructional hour, the most common module of educational experience. Therefore, the CEU has the advantage of being computed and recorded directly and simply for all formats and durations of continuing education experiences wherever the number of contact hours of instruction, or their equivalent in other learning formats, can be established.

The CEU concept is designed to accommodate a wide variety of continuing education opportunities. The number of CEU to be awarded can

be determined only *after* the program or activity has been designed and the schedule has been established. When applied in this manner, the CEU permits flexibility in program length, methodology, or the format used in meeting the educational objectives and intended learning outcomes.

Two sets of criteria for awarding CEU are presented here: one for administration, and one for program or activity. Proper application of these criteria should prove to be helpful to continuing education sponsors or providers (1) in designing new continuing education experiences, (2) in reviewing and improving existing programs and activities, (3) in identifying important issues for personnel responsible for continuing education or training within an organization, (4) for evaluation or review teams in judging the effectiveness of an organization's continuing education efforts, and (5) for staff selection and development in the field of continuing education.

The CEU concept informs regulatory, accrediting, and licensing agencies about acceptable practices in continuing education programs and activities, and may be used as a measure for developing standards for continuing education. It gives the sponsor or provider, as well as the user (individual or organization), an opportunity to plan and record individual educational programs from one level of competence to another. This process may extend over several years, often following a given individual throughout several occupational moves and increasing levels of responsibility. Planning educational experiences to meet long-range goals that lead to a recognized competency level in appropriate areas holds high priority among all professional and technical societies and trade and industry associations.

Benefits to the User or Consumer

The CEU concept provides individuals with recognition for their efforts to update or broaden their knowledge, skills, or attitudes. Records of CEU awarded provide a framework within which individuals can develop and achieve long-range educational goals through a variety of available options. Progress toward such goals, at the individual's own pace and possibly planned over a number of years, can be demonstrated and documented by official records of CEU awarded.

The availability of permanent records and documentation permits individuals to maintain and transmit to others a record of their lifelong learning experiences. For example, individuals may use personal records of number of CEU earned for:

- Reporting maintenance or improvement of professional competence;

- Documenting continuing qualifications for renewing licensure, recertification, or registration;
- Presenting evidence of personal and vocational growth and adjustment to meet changing career demands;
- Recording preparation for a new career, whether because of personal preference or the pressure of individual or technological obsolescence;
- Demonstrating a conscious and persistent effort toward personal development and growth.

Probably the two most common uses of a CEU record or transcript by the individual learner are (1) to supply an employer or prospective employer with information on continuing education and training experiences pertinent to an occupational competence, and (2) to provide documentation to registration boards, certification bodies, or professional and occupational societies of continuing education undertaken to maintain or increase professional competence. An increasing number of companies and organizations now include copies of CEU transcripts in employees' personnel files or add such information to their human resource inventory for use when personnel evaluations and promotions are being considered.

Including continuing education among requirements for voluntary or statutory registration, recertification, and renewal of license has become a way of life for many professional, occupational, and paraprofessional groups, such as engineers, nurses, accountants, lawyers, teachers, medical technologists and specialists, dentists, nursing home personnel, and pharmacists. Individual learners can now receive comparable recognition for a wide variety of continuing education experiences offered by private, governmental, organizational, and collegiate sponsors. CEU records are generated, retained permanently, and transmitted on a basis similar to those for credit courses offered by postsecondary education institutions.

The CEU concept provides consumers—the general public, purchasers of continuing education, and prospective learners—with a tool for judging the appropriateness or quality of a continuing education offering they are considering and a standard for judging continuing education efforts already completed. The concept serves as a guideline (1) for business and industry in structuring, administering, and developing internal continuing education and training activities, and (2) for professional and occupational associations or societies in providing or selecting appropriate sponsors or providers of continuing education for professional or occupational renewal or updating.

CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR AWARDING CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS

The Council on the CEU has developed the following administrative and program *critera* as the minimum requirements for awarding CEU for continuing education activities.

This section also offers *guidelines* for the interpretation and application of the criteria in designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating activities.

These guidelines do not exhaust every potential application, but they do embody the intent and spirit of the criteria. Additional assistance in the appropriate application of the criteria may be obtained from the office of the Council on the Continuing Education Unit (CCEU).

The criteria and the guidelines are intended to clarify and give meaning to the definition of an activity that qualifies for CEU: an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction.

Among the categories of institutions and organizations potentially capable of serving as sponsors of continuing education and of awarding CEU are:

colleges and universities
technical institutes
vocational-technical schools
trade and industrial associations
professional societies
governmental agencies and the armed forces
businesses and industries
hospitals and other health service organizations
labor organizations
proprietary educational organizations
technical societies
other organizations providing noncredit continuing education

Program sponsors (providers) who propose to award and record CEU for individuals participating in their continuing education programs must meet the following administrative and program criteria.

Administrative Criteria

1. **Organization:** The sponsoring organization has an identifiable continuing education arm or unit with designated professional staff having the authority to administer and coordinate an organized schedule of continuing education programs.

   Guidelines: The educational arm or unit may consist of one or more persons. The identity of the unit will be evidenced by a written mission statement that outlines the functions, structure, processes, and philosophy which guide the operations of the continuing education or training program.

2. **Responsibility and Control:** The sponsor or provider, through its continuing education department or office, ensures that both the *administrative* and *program* criteria are followed for learning experiences offering CEU.

   Guidelines: Internal policies should clearly delineate that the continuing education department or office has the authority and responsibility for establishing and implementing review procedures to ensure that continuing education activities offering CEU meet all criteria.

   In jointly-sponsored programs the responsibility for ensuring that administrative and criteria programs are met rests with the provider awarding the CEU.

3. **System for Awarding CEU:**The sponsor provides a system for identifying participants who meet the requirements for satisfactory completion and maintains permanent CEU records for individuals.

   Guidelines: A designated official of the continuing education organization, usually the coordinator or instructor, verifies and reports that each participant has (or has not) met the specified requirements for satisfactory completion and is (or is not) awarded CEU. Permanent individual records are then established indicating the number of CEU awarded each participant. Only those learners who successfully complete a program or activity are awarded CEU, and only those learning experiences for which CEU were awarded appear on the participant's permanent CEU record. Information on individual failures to qualify for CEU is maintained only in the sponsor's program files rather than on individual CEU records.

   Because participants in continuing education experiences may not recognize, at the time, the potential value of a permanent record of their participation and achievement, the decision to record CEU awarded is not left to the individual participant. Therefore, the spon-

sor or provider is expected to maintain a permanent record for each participant who successfully completes a program or activity and to record the number of CEU awarded.

4. **Maintenance and Availability of Records:** A permanent record of participation is maintained for each individual to whom CEU are awarded and is readily available to the individual upon request. While the record may be maintained by the organization or a contracted service, the organization awarding the CEU bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance and availability of permanent records.

   Guidelines: The sponsor or provider responsible for establishing and maintaining permanent records of all CEU awarded to individual participants must have a written policy on retention and releasing of such records. Cumulative records of all CEU earned by each participant are to be available for a minimum of 20 (herewith defined as "permanent") years and are to be issued as an official statement or transcript upon request by the participant. Further, the sponsor or provider must establish, in writing, provisions for permanent maintenance of its CEU records in the event of its demise.

   The following specified items of information are to be included on all CEU records and transcripts:

   - Name and address of the sponsor or provider;
   - Name and Social Security number (or other numerical identification) of the individual participant;
   - Title of the program or activity (the title should be as descriptive as possible);
   - Completion date of the program or activity;
   - Number of CEU awarded;
   - Report of assessment results or other criteria for satisfactory completion.

   Additional information, such as current address and telephone number, may be included at the option of the provider.

5. **Facilities:** The sponsor provides or arranges for appropriate educational facilities, library or reference materials, instructional aids, and equipment consistent with the purpose, design, and intended learning outcomes of each learning experience.

   Guidelines: The design and use of facilities should enhance the opportunities of learners and teaching staff to communicate effectively. For example, lighting, sound, seating, and visuals should be appropriate, and sufficient reference materials and other needed resources should be available to enhance learning.

Program Criteria

1. **Needs Identification:** The program or activity is planned in response to the identified needs of a target audience.

   Guidelines: The purpose of identifying learning needs is to ensure that the planned activity is relevant to the learner's continuing education and/or job requirements. Needs may be identified in several ways, for example, input from learners, their supervisors, their organizations, and/or professions. The key to effective needs assessment is the identification of the gap between what the learner knows and what the learner needs to know. The documentation produced by needs assessment becomes the basis for developing learning outcomes.

2. **Learning Outcomes:** The continuing education provider has clear and concise written statements of intended learning outcomes (e.g., behavioral or performance objectives) for each continuing education program/activity.

   Guidelines: Intended learning outcomes are synonymous with behavioral and performance objectives. Their purpose is to specify the determined skills, knowledge, and/or attitudes that the learner should be able to demonstrate following the continuing education experience. The learners should be aware of these intended learning outcomes prior to and during the activity. Such outcomes form the basis for measurement of progress, periodic feedback, and final assessment.

3. **Instruction:** Qualified instructional personnel are directly involved in determining the program purpose, developing intended learning outcomes, and planning and conducting each learning experience.

   Guidelines: A systematic and sequential process that fulfills the specified purposes and intended learning outcomes of the continuing education experience requires program leaders or instructional staff who have the following qualifications:

   1. Competence in the subject matter;
   2. Understanding of the purposes and intended learning outcomes of the continuing education or training experience;
   3. Knowledge and skill in the instructional methodologies and learning processes to be used;
   4. Ability to communicate the educational content to the participants at an appropriate level.

4. **Content and Methodology:** The content and instructional methodologies selected are consistent with stated learning outcomes, sequenced to facilitate learning, and permit opportunities for the learner to participate and to receive feedback.

   Guidelines: Statements of intended learning outcomes (behavioral or performance objectives) are logically supported by subject content relevant to achieving the outcomes. Both the learner and the instructor have a clear understanding of the intended outcomes and how they are to be achieved.

   Content should be sequenced in a logical manner and should proceed from basic to advanced levels. Instructional methodologies should permit the learner to participate interactively and to receive feedback that strengthens and reinforces learning and measures progress.

5. **Requirements for Satisfactory Completion:** Requirements for satisfactory completion are established for each planned learning experience. These requirements are based on the purpose and intended learning outcomes. Participants should be informed of the requirements for satisfactory completion prior to their participation.

   Guidelines: The requirements for satisfactory completion are established prior to the offering of the program or activity through the mutual agreement of the course coordinator, course director, or other persons responsible for the overall CEU program. Requirements may be based on the ability of participants to demonstrate what they have learned, or some predetermined level of attendance at sessions, or a combination of performance and attendance.

   Programs that require the achievement of certain performance levels should be based on the intended learning outcomes. Requirements which focus on attendance only should be high (e.g., 90 percent and above) and documented by such means as attendance rosters or sign-in sheets.

   Participants should be informed in advance (e.g., continuing education announcement, letter of acceptance) of the requirements for satisfactory completion and should know that only those who meet those requirements will earn CEU.

6. **Assessment of Learning Outcomes:** Procedures established during program planning are used, when applicable, to measure the achievement of intended learning outcomes specified for the pro-

gram or activity as they relate to changes in learners' knowledge, skills, or attitudes.

Guidelines: Assessment refers to the measurement of individual performance in relation to intended learning outcomes. Assessments may be made during and on conclusion of the learning activity. Assessment made during the activity may help to reinforce learning and provide a point of reference for the progress of the learners.

The assessment procedure, its timing, and its application are established as part of the planning process. Because the assessment procedure depends on the intended learning outcomes, they must be measurable or observable, clearly stated, and focused on the level of performance expected of the learner. When a formal assessment of learning outcomes is to be a part of a program or activity, the purpose and nature of the assessment procedure is made known to the participants.

Assessment may take diverse forms, such as performance demonstrations under real or simulated conditions, written or oral examinations, written reports, completion of a project, self-assessment, or locally or externally developed standardized examinations. Moreover, assessments may be made during or at the conclusion of the program or activity, or after some elapsed time following the learning experience. When learning outcomes are formally assessed, the results should be entered on the individual learner's permanent record along with the number of CEU earned.

7. **Program Evaluation:** During the course of planning, a process is established to evaluate major aspects of the continuing education experience, i.e., organizational input; the design, content, content level, and operation; and the extent to which intended learning outcomes were achieved.

   Guidelines: The distinction between assessment and evaluation is: "assessment" refers to the measurement of *individual* learning outcomes; "evaluation" refers to measures of the quality of the administration and operation and of the continuing education experience as a whole.

   Using only participant reaction surveys will not yield the data needed for an adequate evaluation of a continuing education experience. However, substantial and useful participant reaction surveys can be designed (1) to measure what the participants consider to be the benefits of the learning experience, (2) to determine participant satisfaction with the physical arrangements, or (3) for comparisons between different offerings or between the same offer-

ings on different occasions. The evaluation process itself is one measure of the quality of a continuing education program or activity.

The importance of evaluating continuing education experiences for the individual learner, user groups, the sponsor or provider, and the field of continuing education cannot be overemphasized. Evaluation is a coordinated process carried on by the total system and its individual subsystems (the provider's organization and all facets of that organization that are involved in continuing education offerings). It consists of making judgments about programs and activities based on established criteria and observable evidence. Evaluation takes into account the process followed in the program planning effort and is intended to develop information aimed at answering the following questions:

- Did the learning experience and the instructional methods used result in individual behavioral change, i.e., the intended learning outcomes?
- Were the intended learning outcomes appropriate for the stated purpose of the learning experience and for the learners involved?
- Were the intended learning outcomes stated in measurable or observable terms?
- Were the program inputs (decision making during the planning process; fiscal, physical, and instructional inputs of the provider) associated with the learning outcomes?
- Was there a clear relationship between the educational needs of the learners and the stated purposes of the learning experience?
- Was the input of representatives of the clientele group and potential learners during the needs analysis and identification phase of the planning process fully understood and communicated?
- Were the provider's philosophy, mission, structure, functions, and processes effective and efficient in producing the learning outcomes intended for the learning experience?

Quality assurance and control of continuing education experiences are enhanced through long-range, systematic evaluation of what is intended in relation to what actually occurs. The difference can be used as the base for whatever change is needed to ensure that intended learning outcomes are attained. Sponsors and providers of continuing education may find evaluation results are a useful tool when accounting for the results of their programming efforts.

DETERMINING THE NUMBER OF CEU TO BE AWARDED

One Continuing Education Unit (CEU) is awarded for each 10 contact hours of instruction included in a specified continuing education program or activity. The number of contact hours of instruction and appropriate CEU to be awarded are determined *prior to* conducting a learning experience and only after the purpose and intended learning outcomes, requirements for satisfactory completion, content and content level, format, instructional methodology, instructional staff, and time schedule have been established. *A decision to award CEU is not made after the program or activity has been offered.*

The 60-minute clock hour is used as the contact hour in all continuing education experiences. Only the number of complete instructional hours is considered in assigning CEU. For example, 1.7 CEU are assigned for a learning experience with a total of 17, 17.50, or 17.75 contact hours. Any fractional portion of an instructional hour calculated for the total program or activity is disregarded. When unforeseen circumstances require a significant alteration in the instructional schedule, an appropriate adjustment in the number of CEU to be awarded should be recommended by those planning and approving the program.

To determine the number of contact hours, count the hours in the program, and subtract refreshment breaks, lunches, and other activities not directly part of the instructional experience.

Continuing education activities that involve less than 10 contact hours of instruction (less than 1.0 CEU) should be evaluated carefully in terms of the CEU program criteria before deciding to award fractional (e.g., 0.3 or 0.4) CEU. Often, learning experiences scheduled for relatively short periods of time are not adequately planned, sequentially designed, or extensive enough to build a measurable competency that can be considered a significant continuing education experience.

Although the number of CEU to be awarded for each program or activity is recommended during the planning process, responsibility for final determination of the number of CEU awarded for a particular continuing education experience rests with a designated individual who is responsible for administering the CEU system. The accuracy and consistency with which CEU are assigned depends upon the understanding and professional competence of that designated individual.

Calculations of contact hours involved in a continuing education experience may include the following elements:

1. Classroom or meeting session time with direct participation between the learner and instructor or discussion leader is converted directly to contact hours.
2. Activities that use methods of instruction such as supervised independent study, directed reading, or project-based assignments may be awarded CEU. In such cases, the contact hours to be awarded may be determined after field-testing has shown the average amount of time (in hours) required to complete the learning activity.
3. Field trips (minus travel and other administrative time) and other experiential course activities may be awarded CEU, but usually on a basis of at least two experiential hours being required for each contact hour of instruction.

The following and similar activities are *not* included when calculating the number of instructional contact hours for any continuing education experience:

- Time for study, assigned reading, and other related activities outside the classroom or meeting schedule;
- Meeting time devoted to business or committee activities;
- Meeting time devoted to announcements, welcoming speeches, or organizational reports;
- Time allocated to social activities, refreshment breaks, luncheons, receptions, dinners, and so forth. NOTE: Time devoted to a luncheon or dinner presentation integral to the continuing education experience may be included in calculating instructional contact hours.

ALTERNATE DELIVERY METHODS

The multiplicity of continuing education delivery options available in today's marketplace include not only traditional classroom courses but also an array of homestudy courses, self-study packages, computer-assisted instruction, tele/video conferencing, and other methods.

Electronic media usually make these high tech options more accessible, more flexible to learners' needs, schedules, and instructional preferences, and often more affordable since travel is usually eliminated as a major cost factor.

The provider of the continuing education activity has the responsibility for applying in good faith the *program* and *administrative* criteria to all delivery methods to determine eligibility for awarding CEU.

ACTIVITIES THAT DO NOT MEET CEU CRITERIA

Examples of types of learning activities that *do not* qualify for awarding CEU include:

Association Membership and Certification Programs. Noneducational activities of professional, occupational, or other organizations that otherwise may be used to qualify for professional and occupational group membership or certification.

Committee Meetings. Committee activities and assignments.

Credit Programs. The individual may not be awarded both CEU and academic credit for secondary or postsecondary courses and programs.

Entertainment and Recreation. Attendance at cultural performances, entertainment or recreational meetings or activities, and participation in travel groups.

High-School Equivalency. Programs leading to high school equivalency certificates or diplomas.

Individual Scholarship. Independent writings such as articles or research reports, or presentation of papers outside a planned, directly supervised continuing education experience that fulfills CEU criteria.

Mass Media Programs. Programs delivered through the media (e.g., television, radio, newspaper) do not qualify for the CEU, *unless* these presentations are an integral part of a planned continuing education experience that qualifies under CEU criteria.

Meetings, Conferences, and Conventions. Meetings, conferences, and conventions of professional, occupational, or other organizations do not qualify, per se, as continuing education experiences. *However,* specially organized courses, workshops, or seminars held in conjunction with such meetings qualify for CEU when both administrative and program CEU criteria are met.

Program Instruction. An instructor or leader of a continuing education experience for which CEU are awarded is not eligible to receive CEU for that program or activity.

Unsupervised Study. Individual, self-directed study or other form of independent learning experience not planned, directed, and supervised by a sponsor or provider.

Work Experience: On-the-job training and other work experiences do not qualify for CEU *unless* the experience is structured as part of a planned and supervised continuing education experience that fulfills both administrative and program CEU criteria. CEU are not to be awarded based on an evaluation of prior life or work experiences.

FORMATS AND FORMS

For the benefit of organizations that are initiating the awarding of the CEU, a few suggestions about statements and forms to be used may be helpful. Similar statements or forms should be prepared that are applicable to the individual organization.

Program Announcement Copy

The continuing education organization's promotion and advertising must provide full and accurate disclosures about its programs, services, and fees. The statement to be placed on the announcement of an individual continuing education program or activity should include the

number of CEU being awarded for satisfactory completion of the learning experience. For example:

> The Association for Better Continuing Education in Business will award 2.7 CEU to each participant who successfully completes the Workshop on Program Planning. The CEU is a nationally recognized unit designed to provide a record of an individual's continuing education accomplishments. Upon written request to the Association, a transcript of this record will be made available as designated by the participant.

A brief definition of the CEU often is included, where space permits. In a catalog of continuing education offerings, a general statement about CEU should be supplemented by designating the number of CEU awarded in the description of each learning experience.

Certificates of Completion

Continuing education providers are to make available to participants recognition and documentation of their successful completion of continuing education experiences. In addition to required transcripts, sponsors may choose to issue certificates. Such certificates should include essentially the same information as specified earlier for transcripts.

Attendance Record

If attendance records are the only means of determining individual participation in the learning experience, a sign-in sheet for each session should be adequate. Some attendance record designs have provisions for checking a column for each session, which may be helpful for the instructor's use. This format is not recommended if it is to be checked by the participants. It is recommended that, whenever possible, alternate means of determining attendance be used. Materials or evidence of in-class learner activities that can be collected by the instructor provide the same information without conspicuously monitoring learner attendance.

Permanent CEU Record Forms

Individual CEU records may be maintained manually and should be ready to photocopy for providing a transcript when needed. A similar format can be designed for a computer system. It is recommended that provisions be made for recording assessment results when designing a permanent CEU record. An example of one transcript format is shown on the next page. Alternate formats that provide the appropriate information are equally acceptable.

MISSISSINEWA STATE COLLEGE
Management Training Center
South College Drive
Hilltop Heights, Ohio 45678

Name:

SS Number:

Address:

City & State:

ZIP:

Course Number	Course Title and Description	Date Completed	CEU* Awarded	Grade or Assessment

17

One Continuing Education Unit is defined as 10 contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction.

Date

Director, Management Training Center

USING THE CEU FOR DATA COLLECTION

The CEU provides both a record for the individual continuing education participant and a measure for the sponsor or provider to accumulate data to quantify and summarize its continuing education efforts.

Data on total CEU awarded for a particular learning experience may be obtained by multiplying the number of CEU awarded by the number of participants. By completing a similar calculation for each learning experience, data can be accumulated for a related series of continuing education experiences or for all programs and activities over a period of time.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUMMARY

Reporting period: *July 1 to December 31*

Date	*Activity*	*Attendance*	*CEU*	*Total CEU*
Aug. 12-16	Leadership Training Workshop	17	2.8	47.6
Sept. 7-9	Group Interaction Seminar	22	1.5	33.0
Oct. 10-14	Basic Management I	14	2.6	36.4
Oct. 24-25	Interviewing Workshop	12	0.9	10.8
Nov. 7-18	Short Course on Microprocessors	27	5.7	153.9
	Total Attendees	92		
	Total CEU awarded			281.7

With the CEU as a standard of measurement, a more accurate picture is provided of the scope, growth, and changing trends in continuing education programming on a regional and national basis. In 1975, the National Center for Education Statistics began to sample CEU activity in colleges and universities. A similar or parallel national accounting system might be desirable for the compilation of data on continuing education experiences sponsored by other organizations.

The Council collects data annually on the number of continuing education programs and activities for which CEU are awarded, registrations, and total CEU awarded by Council members. Included in the survey are questions concerning a topic of special interest in that year. A summary of the annual survey is published in the *CCEU Reporter.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE CEU

Following are some reasonable questions that might be asked about the CEU, together with answers to those questions.

Who can award CEU?

The CEU may be awarded by any institution, society, agency, association, business, or organization that has an ongoing schedule of continuing education offerings and can meet the administrative and program criteria established by the Council on the Continuing Education Unit. The definition of the CEU is copyrighted and organizations awarding CEU are expected to follow the criteria allied with the definition.

How do we get permission to award Continuing Education Units?

No organization has been established or authorized to grant approval for awarding the Continuing Education Unit. The Council on the CEU, which provides guidance and direction to the development and use of the CEU, is a voluntary membership organization. It is composed of organizations and individuals who use and support the CEU. Organizations that meet certain institutional membership requirements are permitted to use the Council's logo on their promotional material.

How do we get our courses approved for CEU?

The Council on the Continuing Education Unit does not approve specific continuing education programs or activities. Many professional and occupational groups require approval of courses before recognizing their use for the continuing education of their members. Although CEU may be awarded with or without approval of specific groups, professional and occupational groups are under no obligation to accept as appropriate for their members continuing education experiences offered by sponsors or providers.

Can organizations outside the United States award CEU?

There are no restrictions on where CEU may be awarded. The CEU concept is known and used world wide. Copies of *The Continuing Education Unit Criteria and Guidelines* have been distributed throughout the world; several organizations and individuals outside the United States are members of the Council.

How many contact hours are required for a continuing education program or activity to qualify for CEU?

No minimum number of contact hours is specified, but any continuing education experience less than a few hours should be carefully evaluated to determine that all CEU criteria have been met.

Should CEU be awarded for attendance at an annual conference or convention?

CEU should not be awarded for attendance at annual meetings. The organization of the content, the specification of desired learning outcomes, and the format of an annual conference or convention seldom are designed to meet the criteria for awarding CEU. However, courses, workshops, or seminars scheduled independently but associated with annual meetings qualify, if they meet the CEU criteria.

Should CEU be awarded for in-service training programs?

Programs that relate only to the internal procedures and policies of one organization are not appropriate for awarding CEU. Programs that impart general or technical information applicable to the professional or occupational field and will be of value wherever the individual is employed are appropriate for awarding CEU, if they meet the CEU criteria.

Can fractional CEU be awarded?

Yes. The CEU is designed so that any number of contact hours can be recorded decimally. That is, 24 contact hours of instruction are recorded as 2.4 CEU. In this way, each hour of instruction can be recognized. Partial contact hours are not considered in awarding CEU. For example, 16 and one-half hours of instruction is recorded as 1.6 CEU, not 1.65 CEU.

Can participants receive a portion of the assigned CEU for attending part of a program/activity?

No. The requirements for satisfactory completion of a continuing education program/activity entail a specific instructional sequence over a predetermined period of time. Completion of only a portion of the instructional sequence does *not* qualify the individual to receive recognition for his/her participation.

Who keeps the permanent records of CEU awarded?

The maintenance of a permanent CEU record for each participant is the responsibility of the continuing education sponsor or provider that awards the CEU. Cumulative records of all participation for which CEU were awarded and total CEU earned are to be available for each partici-

pant on a permanent basis (i.e., for a minimum of 20 years) and are to be issued as an official statement or transcript upon request by the participant. A permanent record service may be contracted with an outside organization; however, the sponsor or provider of the continuing education experience remains responsible for the maintenance and easy accessibility of all CEU records. Whether a continuing education sponsor or provider maintains its own records or uses a permanent record service, it must have, in writing, provisions for continuing maintenance and accessibility of these records in case of its demise.

What is the cost of awarding CEU?

Some expenses are involved in establishing the system for awarding the CEU, maintaining permanent CEU records, and issuing transcripts. Usually, these costs are included in the departmental budget that provides for the development, staffing, and presentation of quality continuing education experiences. If necessary, CEU costs may be included in the fees charged participants; a separate charge to the participants for the recording of CEU is not encouraged. No fee is assessed by the Council when a sponsor or provider awards CEU.

Who will use CEU records?

The permanent CEU record serves as documentation of meeting continuing education requirements for recertification or renewal of license for members of many professions and occupations and for technicians and paraprofessionals. While the primary use of CEU records is for professional or occupational records, individuals also may wish to document their accomplishments in areas of technical or personal development. Individual CEU records also may be used to document completion of requirements for a major phase of training or education and, thus, indicate readiness to enter into the next phase of training or career enhancement.

How do CEU relate to college credit?

There is no relationship between CEU and academic credit. By definition, the CEU relates only to *noncredit* continuing education experiences. Academic credit applies specifically to degree requirements and CEU are not awarded for that purpose. No institutions of higher education are known to give automatic credit for CEU.

Is it anticipated that a central data bank will be established to collect and report all CEU awarded?

A central data bank to which all CEU could be reported appears unlikely. However, data banks are being operated by and for some organizations, and such a records center might be useful in providing a single, comprehensive record of all educational activities of each member.

Who can become a member of the Council on the Continuing Education Unit?

Organizations involved in sponsoring or providing continuing education are invited to apply for membership in the Council on the Continuing Education Unit. Information on organizational and individual membership may be obtained from the Executive Director, CCEU, 13000 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904.

How are the sponsors or providers of CEU regulated?

The Council on the Continuing Education Unit issues this document to inform organizations about the proper use of the CEU. The CEU concept operates within the context of a free market economy, but sponsors or providers of continuing education are expected to meet these criteria and guidelines in organizing and conducting educational programs. Members report to the Council annually on their CEU activities.

THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT

The Continuing Education Unit (CEU) had its formal beginnings early in 1968 during preliminary discussion among Edward H. Cox, E.I. duPont de Nemours & Company; Paul J. Grogan, University of Wisconsin; William L. Turner, North Carolina State University at Raleigh; and John Connors, Martin Marietta Corporation. In March 1968, Turner and Grogan asked the Board of Directors of the National University Continuing Education Association (NUCEA) to "Appoint a joint committee with industry, government agencies and professional associations" to study and recommend "(a) the definition of a unit of extension credit or other academic currency, and (b) the development of criteria and formats by which these credits could be earned." In July of that year, a National Planning Conference on the Feasibility of a Uniform Crediting and Certification System for Continuing Education, co-sponsored by NUCEA, the U.S. Office of Education (now Department of Education), the U.S. Civil Service Commission (now Office of Personnel Management), and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, was held in Washington, D.C. Organizations that participated in the National Planning Conference were:

Adult Education Association of the U.S.A. (now American Association for Adult and Continuing Education)
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community and Junior Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
AFL-CIO
American Hospital Association
American Medical Association
American Society for Engineering Education
American Society for Personnel Administration
American Society for Public Administration
American Society of Engineers
Association of University Evening Colleges (now Association for Continuing Higher Education)
Cambridge Institute for Management Education
Commission on Engineering Education
E. I. duPont de Nemours & Company, Inc.
Engineers Council for Professional Development (now Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology)
Engineers Joint Council
General Learning Corporation

McGraw-Hill, Inc.
National Academy of Engineers
National Home Study Council
National Society of Professional Engineers
National University Extension Association (now National University Continuing Education Association)
Office of Emergency Planning, Executive Offices of the President
Science Research Associates
United Auto Workers
U.S. Armed Forces Institute
U.S. Civil Service Commission (now Office of Personnel Management)
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Department of Defense
U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (now Department of Health and Human Services)
U.S. Department of the Air Force, Department of Defense
U.S. Office of Education (now Department of Education)

Conference participants agreed that a standardized, nationally accepted unit was needed to reduce the confusion and fragmentation inherent in the variety of systems then in use for recording and reporting continuing education activities. The interest and sense of urgency expressed during the conference resulted in the creation of a National Task Force to determine the feasibility of a uniform unit of measurement and to develop a proposal for such a unit.

After deliberating over a period of two years, the National Task Force agreed on the feasibility of a uniform unit of measurement, developed the concept, defined the Continuing Education Unit and, in 1970, published an Interim Statement. This brief statement was the basis for the subsequent application of the CEU in a variety of situations. The Interim Statement called for reaction and suggestions from the users so the guidelines could be adjusted to field applications.

Few suggestions were received and none indicated the need for any substantive change in the concept as it was presented. The first and subsequent editions of *The Continuing Education Unit Criteria and Guidelines* incorporated essentially the same concepts and criteria as those outlined in the Task Force's Interim Statement.

The Interim Statement also called for initiation of a pilot project to test the Task Force recommendations for applying the CEU. Fourteen universities cooperated and reported on more than 600 continuing education programs and activities involving more than 28,000 individuals. While the

recommendations growing out of the pilot project suggested additional interpretation, clarification, and suggested procedures and forms, no changes in the basic CEU concept were indicated.

Late in 1971, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools adopted a revised Standard Nine on Special Activities relating to extension, public service, and continuing education activities, which incorporated the CEU concept into the reporting system for the member colleges and universities.

In 1977, the activity of the National Task Force was terminated and the Council on the Continuing Education Unit, a nonprofit membership organization, was incorporated and assumed responsibility for advancing the concept and the proper use of the CEU.

THE COUNCIL ON THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT

The Council on the Continuing Education Unit was incorporated in 1977 by members of the National Task Force on the CEU. The Council was organized to place the monitoring, refining, and future guidance of CEU activities in a self-renewing nonprofit organization led by persons active in a wide spectrum of lifelong learning activities. The Council is a federation of organizations and individuals devoted to the constructive and consistent use of the CEU and to improvement of the quality and effectiveness of continuing education, training, and human resource development. The Council is not an accrediting body.

The Council is unique in joining together the capabilities of business and industrial firms, certification bodies, government agencies, health service institutions, labor organizations, postsecondary educational institutions, and professional societies and associations interested in the advancement of continuing education and training.

The Council's Purposes

The Council was organized to carry forward and expand the work initiated by the National Task Force in conceiving and developing the Continuing Education Unit. Its specific objectives are to:

1. Promote the development, interpretation, and dissemination of the best methods, standards, and ideals for the use of the Continuing Education Unit.
2. Ensure continuity in the development of the Continuing Education Unit and seek to achieve consistency in its application.
3. Assist in developing and strengthening educational and professional standards in the field of continuing education and training.
4. Work cooperatively with colleges, universities, and other educational institutions, business organizations, professional societies, associations, health service institutions, agencies of government, and other interested organizations to increase the quality of continuing education and training, and to promote the understanding and appropriate use of the CEU.
5. Serve as a forum for policy formulation, act as a clearinghouse for developments and methods, and publish information relating to CEU and to continuing education and training.
6. Engage in research and development which will provide more reliable and valid information about the CEU or continuing education and training and will strengthen their effectiveness and quality.

What the Council Does for Its Members

The Council's focus is on the exchange of information, experience, and new ideas about the CEU and effective continuing education and training. It helps with:

Communication. The Council issues a newsletter, *The CCEU Reporter*, as well as research and other special reports for its members. It holds an annual conference to discuss needs, problems, and solutions relating to its current research activities.

Certification Mark. The Council recognizes institutions and organizations which follow its CEU standards in providing continuing education or training and in awarding CEU for completion of programs. Such organizations, when approved as institutional members, are authorized to use the Council's certification mark or logo in their printed materials.

Policy Development. The Council monitors the awarding and use of CEU on a continuing basis and takes note of inconsistent practices and of developing needs. Council committees propose refinements and additions to the CEU guidelines in the interest of improving continuing education and training.

Research and Data Collection. The Council gathers data and information annually on the use of the CEU and reports its findings in *The CCEU Reporter.* In addition, the Council initiates and supports studies of standards and other research in noncredit education.

Other Services. The Council issues reports and publications and, depending upon needs expressed by the membership, offers other support services to continuing education and training organizations. A limited number of grants are provided each year for research in continuing education that parallels the objectives of the Council.

Reduced Charges. Members are able to register at lower cost at the annual meetings and receive a discount on the price of publications sold by the Council. An initial copy of most publications is provided to each member at no charge.

How the Council Is Guided

Direction of the Council on the Continuing Education Unit is in the hands of its membership. Official representatives of the member organizations meet annually to elect the Council's officers and members of the Board of Directors, to discuss major research needs and policies, and to consider any proposed changes in the Council's bylaws.

The Council is governed by its Board of Directors, which establishes the policies, plans, and budgets under which authorized activities and

services are carried out by the Council's officers, board members, executive committee, executive director, and other committees and project groups.

The Board of Directors consists of the officers (president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and past president), six directors elected by the members of the Council, and five directors appointed by the Board primarily to provide representation from additional constituencies. The Executive Director is a non-voting member of the Board.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE COUNCIL

The Council on the Continuing Education Unit has Institutional Members, Affiliates, and Individual Members. Approval for Affiliate or Institutional Membership follows consideration and acceptance by the Membership Review Committee of the Council.

Institutional Members

Institutional Members are organizations or institutions that follow the approved criteria and procedures in awarding continuing education units and, when approved for membership, are qualified to participate in the affairs of the Council, elect Council officers and directors, and are authorized to use the CEU certification mark under the auspices of the Council. Applications for Institutional Membership may be requested from the Council office.

Requirements for Institutional Membership are:

1. The organization or institution is chartered or incorporated or is a recognized governmental unit. Educational institutions offering an academic degree must be accredited by a regional accrediting association or by another accrediting association holding membership in the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, or be specifically accepted by action the Board of Directors of the Council on the CEU. Organizations, corporations, associations, and professional societies not eligible for such accreditation are exempted from this requirement by action of the Board of Directors of the Council.
2. The organization or institution has an identifiable educational arm or division empowered to administer and coordinate an organized ongoing schedule of noncredit continuing education or training programs and activities. This educational arm must have been in operation during the previous three years, offering a schedule of at least six activities with a minimum of 120 enrollments each year.
3. The educational arm of the organization or institution is under the direction of a full-time administrator or other professional staff assigned for a major portion of their time to the administration and operation of noncredit continuing education programs or training activities. The administration of an educational program by an education (or other) committee does not fulfill this requirement.
4. The organization has been awarding continuing education units *in accordance with the CEU criteria for a period of not less than one*

year prior to submitting an application for institutional membership.

5. The organization or institution abides by *The Continuing Education Unit Criteria and Guidelines* as approved and published by the Council.

6. The organization or institution will supply data to the Council annually on the number of programs, participants, and continuing education units awarded during the year, and will include sample brochures, course schedules, current catalogs, and forms used in the CEU program.

7. The application for Institutional Membership is to be accompanied by the following supporting materials to be considered by the Council's Membership Review Committee:

   a. An internal policy or procedures statement relating to the use of the CEU, the assignment of administrative and supervisory responsibility, and the provisions for maintaining the permanent records;

   b. Course catalogs or individual program announcements that state the number of CEU to be awarded (at least 5 or 6 different samples);

   c. A detailed hourly time schedule for each of the sample courses to confirm the accurate assignment of CEU;

   d. Information on the requirements for satisfactory completion established for each of the courses for which CEU are awarded;

   e. Procedures and/or forms indicating the method used to assure and verify the satisfactory completion of programs by individual participants, and for reporting and certifying completion to the office responsible for maintaining the permanent records;

   f. Sample evaluation instruments or a statement of evaluation procedures to indicate the system of program evaluation and/or student assessment that has been established;

   g. A copy of the certificate of completion (if one is used) specifying the number of CEU earned by the individual program participant;

   h. A sample of the transcript or official record form (may be a computer printout) currently in use to fill requests for individual CEU records;

   i. A copy of the information given to program participants about the CEU and how to obtain an official statement of CEU earned.

Affiliate Members

Organizations or institutions that wish to participate in and be informed about the deliberations of the Council, its elections, and its activities may apply for Affiliate Membership. Organizations or institutions which are eligible to apply for Affiliate Membership include:

1. Those providers desiring to award CEU and to qualify for institutional membership when all of the standards can be met.
2. Those organizations that do not award CEU but have a specific area of interest relating to the CEU and the activities of the Council.
3. Certification or other approval bodies relating to continuing education and training or to continuing education providers.

An application for Affiliate Membership should be requested from the Council office. The requirements for Affiliate Membership are:

1. The organization or institution must be incorporated or chartered or be a recognized governmental unit.
2. The organization or institution must have a training or continuing education program in operation, *or* have an identifiable area of interest or responsibility in training, in continuing education, or related to providers of continuing education. Appropriate supporting information must be provided with the application.
3. The organization or institution must certify its willingness to support the administrative and program criteria set forth in *The Continuing Education Unit Criteria and Guidelines* as approved and published by the Council.

Affiliate members of the Council may participate in all deliberations of the Council and may vote on all items of business other than those involving membership dues or amendments to the bylaws of the Council.

Individual Members

Individual Members of the Council are persons interested in training and continuing education who support the concept of the continuing education unit and who wish to participate in Council deliberations and activities and receive information made available by the Council. Individual members have a voice in the Council's discussions but do not have voting privileges.

An application for Individual Membership should be requested from the Council office.

Membership Dues

Membership dues are established by the CCEU Board of Directors and are payable annually. Full annual dues, as specified on the Membership Application, are payable when the application for membership is submitted.

The Council's membership year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30 of the following year. Members joining the Council during the last half of the membership year are given a prorated credit applicable to the dues for the second year of membership.

Council on the Continuing Education Unit

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